



**JUNIOR DOCTOR MANAGEMENT OF PATIENT IDENTIFIABLE INFORMATION IN EAST MIDLANDS AND THE SOUTH EAST: A COMPARISON STUDY**

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**Introduction:** The Data Protection Act and Caldicott guidelines are important for patient care and are key instruments for regulating patient identifiable information. We aimed to examine the knowledge and practice of surgeons in this area.

**Methods:** Multiple choice questionnaires were collected from fifty doctors in two UK hospitals. Legal aspects of data management and usage were examined.

**Results:** The return rate was 100%. Identifiable information was stored electronically by 64%/60% of juniors in East Midlands (EM) and South East (SE) respectively. 60% of EM and 58% of SE juniors used hospital computers, 8%EM/2%SE used personal computers and 2%EM/0%SE used CDs. 34%EM/36%SE used memory sticks and of these 86%EM/82%SE were not password protected. Paper ward lists were kept by 90% in both regions. Of these 98%EM/90%SE included diagnoses. 34%EM/36%SE were aware of the Caldicott principles with 14%EM/14%SE aware of the role of the Caldicott Guardian and 58%EM/58%SE were aware of the Data Protection Act requirements.

**Conclusions:** Most doctors use a variety of data storage methods and should be aware of their legal responsibilities. Unfortunately practice regularly falls short of required standards and this is a national issue.